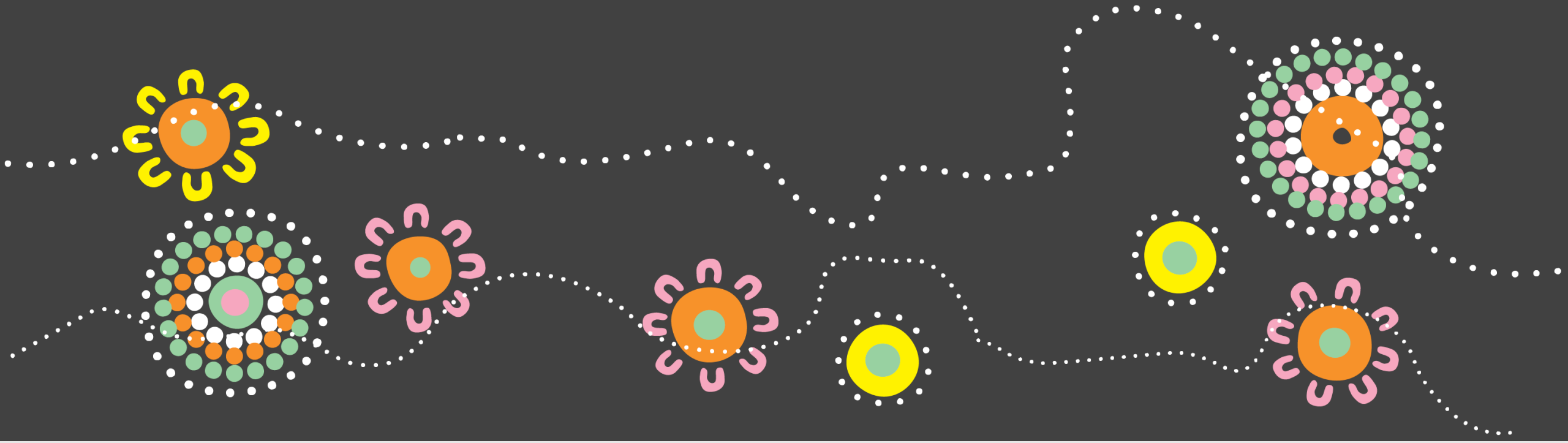
8 September 2026

How's the TIS Program going so far?: Learnings from CIRCA's bird's eye view





Lena Etuk
CIRCA – Research & Evaluation Director



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters in which we work and the knowledge-holders of the oldest continuous cultures in the world. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

Original artwork by: Cassie Willis (Ngemba/Yuwaalaraay, Brewarrina NSW)

What is CIRCA?

circa
Culturally Inclusive
Research Centre Australia

- Established in 2000
- We specialise in market research & program evaluation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD), and disability communities
- Based in Gadigal Country (Redfern)
- CIRCA network spans the continent
- Our research focuses on culturally inclusive approaches and methods

Overview of CIRCA's evaluation

Our role is to evaluate the implementation of TIS and some outcomes.*

Is the program being delivered in a way that best makes it possible to *further* reduce tobacco and vape use among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?

***Note:** CIRCA is also evaluating the TIS NRPPs, aligned with this approach.

Meet the Wave 2 research team



Lena Etuk

Director, Research and Evaluation



Ly Tong

Senior Research Consultant



Wayne Bynder

Community Engagement Officer



Shane D'Angelo

Research Associate



Yvonne Weldon

Research Associate

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Based Research Consultants:

1. Alice Beilby
2. Ella Kris
3. Jo Campbell
4. Kristie Burge
5. Laila Rind
6. Leeann Ramsamy
7. Maria Morgan
8. Merle Hall
9. Rachel Dunn
10. Shane D'Angelo
11. Tanya McLean
12. Trevor Woodhead

TIS Evaluation - Wave 2 methods

- 34 AWPs from July 2025, compared to AWPs from July 2023 and July 2024
- 33 PRs from Jan-Jun 2025, compared to PRs from Jul-Dec 2023 and Jan-Jun 2024
- 20x FY2024-25 Grant acquittals
- NBPU Progress Reports
- Interviews and focus groups with National Coordinator, Department of Health and Aged Care, and NBPU staff
- Interviews with TIS Coordinators – 25 out of 37 IREGs
- Focus groups with TIS staff – 21 out of 37 IREGs
- CEO survey: 10 respondents (out of 22 CEOs)
- TIS Staff survey: 139 respondents (out of 231)
- Quantitative and qualitative analysis



Now for something a little different...



CIRCA Evaluation Trivia!

1. **CIRCA's role is to evaluate what?**
   - A. If the TIS program is being implemented as intended
   - B. The impact of TIS on smoking and vaping rates
   - C. Which TIS teams are doing better than others
   - D. How individual TIS team staff are performing

CIRCA Evaluation Trivia!

2. **How many waves of data collection is CIRCA doing in this grant period?**

A. 1 wave

B. 2 waves

C. 3 waves

D. 4 waves

CIRCA Evaluation Trivia!

3. **From which of these groups is CIRCA NOT collecting data?**

   A. CEOs of TIS grant recipient organisations

   B. TIS team staff

   C. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members

   D. NBPU

CIRCA Evaluation Trivia!

4. **Who uses data from your Performance Reports?**

   A. CIRCA

   B. DSS Funding Agreement Managers (FAM)

   C. NBPU

   D. All of the above

CIRCA Evaluation Trivia!

5. **True or false, CIRCA's evaluation findings about the TIS program are always kept secret?**

   A. True

   B. False

Answers!



CIRCA Evaluation Trivia!

1. **CIRCA's role is to evaluate what?**
   - **A. If the TIS program is being implemented as intended**
   - B. The impact of TIS on smoking and vaping rates
   - C. Which TIS teams are doing better than others
   - D. How individual TIS team staff are performing

CIRCA Evaluation Trivia!

2. **How many waves of data collection is CIRCA doing in this grant period?**

A. 1 wave

B. 2 waves

C. 3 waves

D. 4 waves

CIRCA Evaluation Trivia!

3. **From which of these groups is CIRCA NOT collecting data?**

   A. CEOs of TIS grant recipient organisations

   B. TIS team staff

   C. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members

   D. NBPU

CIRCA Evaluation Trivia!

4. **Who uses data from your Performance Reports?**

   A. CIRCA

   B. DSS Funding Agreement Managers (FAM)

   C. NBPU

   D. All of the above

CIRCA Evaluation Trivia!

5. **True or false, CIRCA's evaluation findings about the TIS program are always kept secret?**

   A. True

   B. False

(Some) Wave 2 Findings





Areas of strength

- **Reach**
  - Improved coverage: The percentage of LGAs reached increased from 42% in the Jul – Dec 2023 period to 61% in the Jan – Jun 2024 period and to 74% in the Jan – Jun 2025 period.
  - Improved engagement and exposure of TIS messaging and activities (21%, up from 15% in Jul-Dec 2023)
- **Local community engagement**
  - Continue to have strong partnerships with local quit support services
  - Continue to have frequent engagement with external organisations and community members
- **Cultural Safety**
  - TIS teams continue to demonstrate they’re embedding cultural safety in their activities in various ways



Areas of strength

- **Evidence-based activities**
  - Majority of TIS activities continue to be evidence-based
  - Majority of TIS coordinators and staff are now demonstrating confident and effective use of evidence in their activities
- **Impact on community**
  - Still the greatest reported successes are in increasing peoples' knowledge about the harms of using tobacco and e-cigarettes
  - Teams are now reporting nearly as high success in increasing peoples' intentions to create smoke- or aerosol-free environments
  - This is an improvement from Wave 1 – because TIS teams are now reporting roughly equal success changing knowledge as intentions.



Opportunities for improvement

- **Local community engagement**
  - Across IREGs, still need more consistent collaboration of TIS teams with non-TIS funded organisations and communities
- **Cultural Safety**
  - Across IREGs, still need more consistent collection and sharing of TIS program output or outcome results w/local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community



Opportunities for improvement

- **Evidence-based activities**
  - Greater TIS team access to evidence about what works across similar geographic contexts
  - Subcontracted organisation access to advice/guidance from NBPU via their TIS lead organisation
- **Impact on community**
  - Increase use of knowledge and intention impact data to inform deployment of different activities. Not all interventions have the same impact.

Group discussion

What do you make of these findings?

- Anything surprising?
- How do you feel about them?
- What are some key takeaways for you?
- Anything you want more information about?



Implications

- The TIS program continues to perform well, with cultural safety being a key strength and the use of evidence-based approaches helping to guide activities.
- Over time, TIS teams have expanded the reach of TIS messages and activities.
- TIS teams are contributing to positive changes in community knowledge and attitudes.
- Staffing plays a critical role in the success of TIS.
- Despite the inherent challenges of this work, teams have demonstrated persistence and adaptability, consistently engaging communities and finding creative ways to deliver TIS messages.

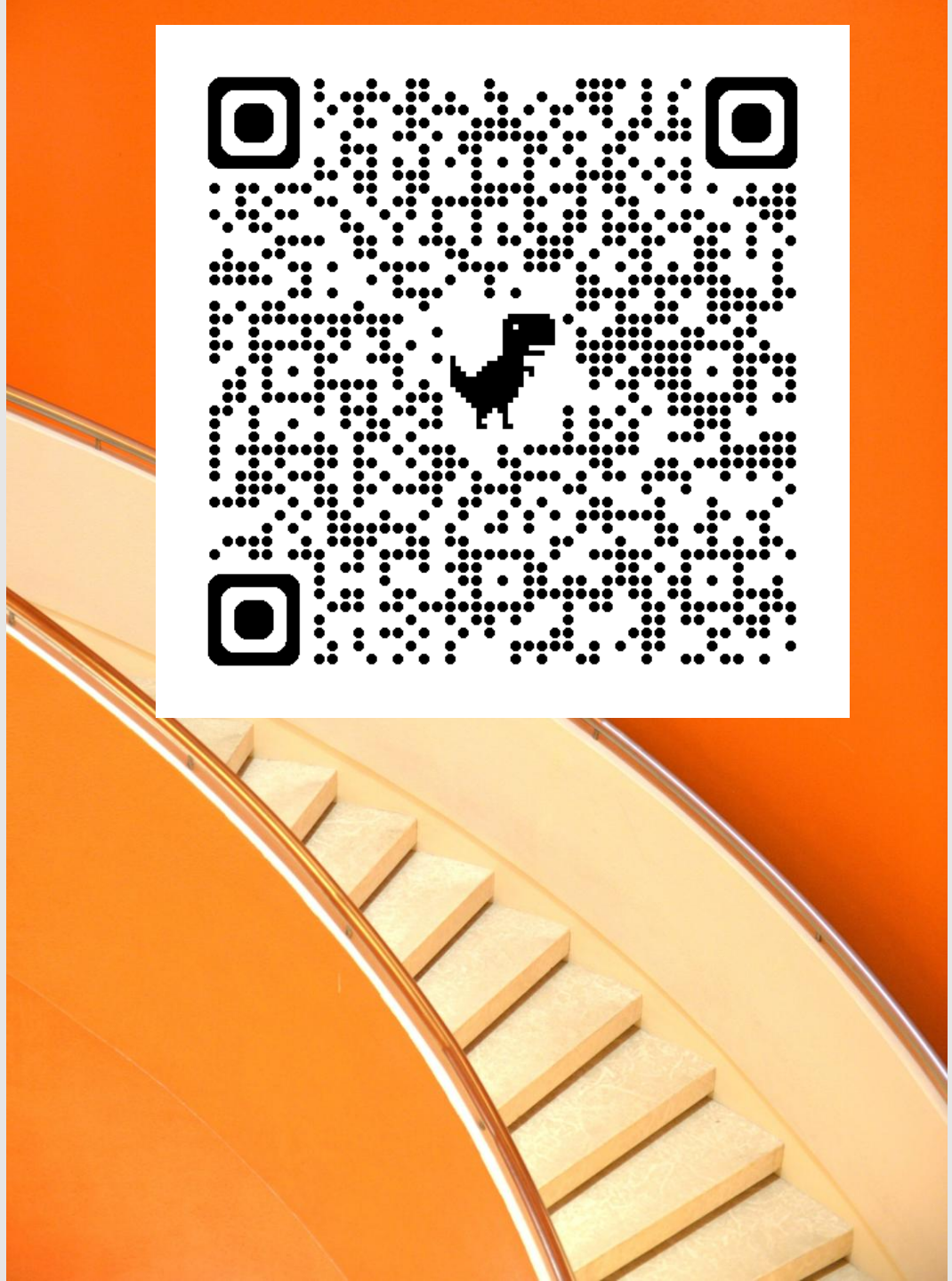


Recommendations

- Teams should continue using a range of communication methods to maximise exposure and engagement
- Continue working to ensure teams have access to the most up-to-date data and evidence
- Teams should pursue activities that yield measurable impacts on community members' knowledge and intentions, as appropriate for their communities
- Teams need support, navigating periods of being understaffed and navigating challenging partnerships
- Maintain structure of program, w/Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation at all levels
- There should continue to be stable funding for the TIS program

What's next?

- Wave 2 report accessible from TIS website →
  - https://tacklingsmoking.org.au/monitoring-and-evaluation/circa-documents/
- Wave 3
  - Commence data collection for Wave 3 Report in October 2026
  - PR & AWP Data receipt
  - Data analysis
  - Reporting (due Mar 2027)



circa
Cultural & Indigenous
Research Centre Australia

We're the experts in culturally sensitive research, policy and evaluation

Our team offers insights derived from 20+ years of experience working with diverse communities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in remote, rural and urban settings.

We speak more than 50 languages. We'll make sure your questions are heard. You'll trust in our methods and value the clarity our research brings.

+61 2 8585 1313

info@circaresearch.com.au

16 Eveleigh St, Redfern NSW 2016